

SYLLABUS FOR JS 496E and RTM 151F

Instructor: Gabe Goldman, Ph.D. email: primskills@yahoo.com

On-campus classroom: Redwood Hall 153

Off-campus site: Brandeis-Bardin Institute (25 minute drive from CSUN on 118 Freeway to Simi Valley)

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Students will examine the ecological practices and values found in centuries of Jewish literature and oral teachings, and explore ways to integrate them with nature awareness and wilderness skills. Students who take this course must also take the specific section of RTM 151F (2 units) that is linked to it. The combined experience will integrate Jewish ecological beliefs and practices with basic survival skills, navigational skills, and the awareness skills necessary for identifying and evaluating potential dangers. Arranged wilderness field trips are required.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Attendance at the six class meetings. Five of these will be held on the CSUN campus on Tuesday evenings 7-8:30 p.m. in Redwood 153 on the following evenings: August 26, September 2, September 9, October 7, and October 28. One of these will be held off-campus at a wilderness site on Sunday, September 21, 9 a.m. – 12 noon.
2. Attendance on the full camping trip (Friday noon until Sunday late afternoon) at Brandeis-Bardin Institute, October 17-19.
3. Complete all readings
4. Short exam on survival/wilderness information
5. Term paper that demonstrates students' understanding of Jewish ecological principles through application to contemporary environmental issues and problems

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY AND COURSE READINGS:

1. *The Jewish Sourcebook on the Environment and Ecology*, Ronald H. Isaacs; Jason Aronson Inc., 1998
2. *Tom Brown's Field Guide to Wilderness Survival*, Tom Brown, Berkley Books, 1993.

EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS AND COSTS:

1. Pocket knife, flash light
2. Sleeping bag or blanket roll
3. Cost of food for camping trip (approximately \$30) – food will be purchased for you
4. Everything else will be supplied

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Class One

- Overview of the course, requirements, expectations and goals
- Types of survival (personal, environmental, cultural,)
- Sacred Order of Survival with Survival Survey quiz
- Introduction to Jewish ecological principles and practices
- Participants will make bow drills for use on fieldtrip camping experience
- Readings to be determined

Class Two

- Discuss readings and contemporary significance
- Fire-making and bowdrill
- Conventional tent set up and equipment usage
- Make clay plates for camping trip
- Types of shelter
- Water purification
- Role of nature in Jewish tradition and practice
- Edible and medicinal plants on campus
- Readings to be determined

Class Three

- Discuss readings
- Use of compass and topo maps
- Basket making
- Partner challenge
- *Bal Tashchit* in American life
- Cultural survival, lessons learned from nature
- Readings to be determined

EXAM – Students will be tested on their understanding of Sacred Order of Survival, safety issues and technical understanding of the wilderness skills they will be practicing on their camping trip.

Class Four

During this session, we will construct the oldest known type of wilderness shelter called a *sukkah*. According to Jewish tradition, this is the type of shelter the Israelites lived in when they left Egypt. We will construct our *sukkah* using one or more ancient shelter building techniques including outdoor loom and stacked-wall construction. We will also examine the holiday of *Sukkot* through a naturalist’s lens.

Class Five

- Natural navigation skills
- Awareness skills – fox walking
- Site identification
- Lashing and knot skills
- Conservation and animal care in Jewish tradition
- Meal planning and cooking techniques
- Mediterranean ecosystem similarities to Israel

Wilderness Camping Trip

NOTE: Students must show proof of current tetanus vaccination before they will be allowed to participate in the camping trip. Students must inform instructor of any health conditions, allergies that could affect them on the camping trip or any medications they are taking.

Day One

- Assessing potential dangers and selecting camping site
- Construction of latrine
- Construction of wood-fire oven for baking bread
- Tent set up
- Construction of lean-to, palm branch shelters
- Night skies and night navigation
- Rope making from plant fiber
- Principles of experiential education
- Text study to be announced

Day Two

- Day hike to demonstrate navigation and awareness skills
- Identify and harvest wild edibles for means
- “Lost in the Woods” exercise
- Solo sit to practice awareness skills
- Exploration of ancient Chumash cave dwellings and petroglyph
- Flora and fauna
- Discussion of philosophy of Jewish environmental and nature education
- Role of race and social equality in environmental abuse

Day Three

- Discussion of spiritual dimension of Jewish environmentalism
- Optional: Ancient Native American earth meditations
- Animal tracking and signs
- Principle of ancient snares
- Breaking camp and leaving site better than found
- Community reflection

Class Five

We will devote this time to reflecting on the lessons learned on the camping trip, to the broader application of wilderness survival skills in everyday life and on other student outcomes as a result of this course.

REFLECTIVE/ANALYTICAL WRITING

Camping Trip - Term Paper: 5-8 page paper discussing the Jewish values learned in the course. Explain them, and explain how they were applied (or could have been) in this or other wilderness survival experiences, and how these values address contemporary environmental issues or problems. In this paper you will also reflect on the camping experience, what you learned, what experiences were most valuable, what you achieved that you are most proud of and recommendations / suggestions for making the trip and/or class better.

GRADES

Class attendance, participation, and exam	= 30% of grade
Fieldtrip Camping trip	= 30%
Term Paper	= 30%
Camping Trip Paper	= 10%